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INSERT: In JPRS 84088 of 11 August 1983
No 2798 of this series, please substitute
this for page 1 to correct a misspelling.

JPRS 84088

11 August 1983

NEAR EAST/SOUTH ASIA REPORT

No. 2798

ARAB TRIBES IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Riyadh QALB JAZIRAT AL-'ARAB in Arabic Vol 2, 1968 pp 129-213,
407-470

CONTENTS

[Part 3 and index from book "Heart of the Arabian Peninsula," by Fu'ad Hamzah,
470 pages]

[Text] Part Three. Arab Tribes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Comprises
two chapters and detailed tables containing tribe branches)

Chapter One. Arab Tribe Genealogy¹

Arab Preservation of Their Genealogy--Difficulties in Matching Branches With
Their Stems

In his book "Nihayat Al-Arab Fi Funun Al-Adab," Al-Nuwayri said, "The Arabs boasted the knowledge of their genealogy over non-Arabs (Al-'Ajam), because they were very careful to know their lineage, adhered to their noble descent, knew their peoples and races, identified their tribes eloquently by their poets and speakers, united with all their families and clans, tended toward their divisions, groups and clans, banished the intruders and spoke out vehemently."²

However, with the Arab carefulness to keep their genealogy, adhere to their descent and observe the sequence of their branches and divisions, it is quite difficult for any researcher to identify the origins of all Arab tribes in existence at the present time due to the loss of a considerable part of the writings of the ancestors about lineage and several links of the chain of ancestry during the weakness of Arab countries and differences among their heads and tribes in the Middle Ages. It is clear that during these periods, considerable tribal migration took place, with one tribe replacing another or conquering it and forcing it out of its territory and into oblivion. [132] Therefore, we did not attempt in this book to relate branches to their ancient origins except where correctness was absolutely verified; everything else was left to researchers and explorers. We confined ourselves to branches now existing, and we listed them by the names they are known by. It is noteworthy that we witnessed cases where branches of a single tribe descend from several distant origins; this arising, we presume, from the alliance of branches some time in the past at a time we cannot pinpoint.

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MAKEUP OF NILE VALLEY PARLIAMENT SUMMARIZED

Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic No 3059, 27 May 83 p 7

Article: "Nile Valley Parliament In Brief"

Text The Nile Valley Parliament has the following structure:

Presidents of the People's Assembly of Egypt and the Sudan.

Up to 30 members of the Egyptian People's Assembly, and a similar number representing the Sudanese People's Assembly.

Some members known for their competence and whose number does not exceed that of the selected members. The president of the republic in each country would appoint half of them for two renewable years.

The Nile Valley Parliament is alternately presided over by the presidents of the Egyptian and the Sudanese People's Assembly for a term extending until the beginning of the next regular session.

At least two-thirds of the members constitute the parliament's quorum. Meetings are public. Closed meetings may be held at the request of the head of the session or two-thirds of the members.

Thoughts and views expressed by members while performing their duties in the parliament are not charged as offensive. No criminal action is to be taken against any parliament member, nor may be arrested.

Before he performs his duties, a member is to take this oath before the Nile Valley Parliament: "I swear in the name of God the Almighty to sincerely safeguard the integrity of the republics of Egypt and the Sudan and their republican regions, and to protect the interests of the people and respect the constitution in each country and the integration charter between them.

The interim rules of procedures of the Nile Valley Parliament are composed of 142 articles. Article 139 states that the head of the parliament will arrange for the special procedures by which deliberations during meetings of the parliament and its committees are assimilated by the various mass print and

electronic media, to facilitate the task of media representatives in printing and broadcasting discussions accurately.

Article 129 states that the parliament's budget is independent and is recorded as one figure in the integration budget.

Article 20 states that, to be passed, resolutions and recommendations of the Nile Valley Parliament have to be approved by an absolute majority of members. Article 21 states that the Nile Valley Parliament is concerned with studying and commenting on issues stated in the charter, topics referred by the Supreme Integration Council and the council's general annual report, in compliance with article 14. The same article also states that the Nile Valley Parliament is concerned with the approval of the joint draft plan for the coordination of social and economic developments, the approval of the budget and the final balance sheet, as well as with studying and proposing the objectives stated in the charter it deems capable of achieving. The parliament is to transmit its resolutions and recommendations to the Supreme Integration Council.

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POOR QUALITY IRON IMPORTS DISCUSSED

Cairo AL-AHRAR in Arabic 13 Jul 83 p 2

Article: "Dr 'Awwarah Emphasizes: Defective Iron Manufactured Abroad Exported Specifically To Egypt"

Text Dr Ibrahim 'Awwarah, member of the People's Assembly (independent), emphasized that some circles abroad manufacture reinforced iron and cement in violation of standards, specifically for export to Egypt. 'Awwarah wondered: where was the government when the disaster of collapsing buildings occurred?

Independent and opposition members of the People's Assembly attacked the government housing policy, as being responsible for the disastrous collapse of new buildings.

Engineer Hasan Durrah, of the Labor Party, emphasized that the government applies law only to the poor.

Ulfat Kamil, of the Liberal Party, asked the government to respect the law and act to implement it without discrimination between the rich and the poor.

Ulfat Kamil also stressed that the multiplicity of legislation was behind the increasing collapse of new buildings.

She asked for the consolidation of all housing laws into one law rather than separating them into various laws and procedures.

Dr Hilmi al-Hadidi, who has recently joined the National Party, explained that law alone would not solve the problem because the matter was not limited to residential buildings, but has also been extended to government facilities, coupled with the spreading phenomenon of cheating on construction material.

Mumtaz Nassar (independent) called for the elimination of blatant inadequacies in the legislation issued to organize owner-tenant relations because such laws contributed in worsening the housing problem, increasing incidents of manipulation and deviation, and cheating on construction material.

SINAI COMMITTEE PROPOSES DAM, FACTORY, COAL PROJECTS

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 9 Jun 83 p 8

Article by Fu'ad al-Shadhili: "Supreme Committee For Sinai Development Decides: Constructing a Dam to Store Water in al-'Arish Valley and a Cement Factory; and Giving Priority to the Al-Maghara Coal Project"

Text In its meeting under the chairmanship of Dr Fu'ad Muhyi-al-Din yesterday, the Supreme Committee for Sinai Development approved the construction of a cement factory in al-Hasanah region, north of Sinai. Scheduled for the 1983/84 plan, the factory will have a five million ton capacity and the project will include a settlement for personnel housing.

Counselor 'Adil Abd-al-Baqi, Minister of Cabinet Affairs, stated that the committee also approved of conducting an economic feasibility study for the construction of a dam to store water in the Dab'ah region in the al-'Arish Valley. A LE 70,000 allocation has been set for this purpose.

Maximum storage capacity of the dam is estimated at 40 million cubic meters to be used for expanding agriculture on a 20,000-feddan area. The project will cost LE 10 million.

The committee agreed to consider the utilization of al-Maghara coal a priority project in the Sinai development plan. The project's maximum capacity is estimated at 600,000 tons annually, including 150,000 tons to be used by the coke factory in Helwan to produce the coal necessary for production at the iron and steel factory. The rest will be used for the electric power generation station in the 'Uyun Musa region.

Gross costs of al-Maghara coal utilization are estimated at LE 98 million. The project will provide 600 job opportunities.

A housing settlement for the factory personnel and their families will be built on the mining site, a 120-kilometer long railway line will be extended to link both al-Hasanah and al-Maghara with Isma'iliah, and another line will connect al-Maghara with Bi'r al-'Abd. Financing the project through foreign loans will be studied.

The committee reviewed the production and service projects which have already been implemented in the Sinai Peninsula during the current fiscal year. LE

211 million has been invested in these projects, in addition to LE 9.5 million allocated for easy housing loans.

During the first nine months of the current fiscal year, 72 percent of the projects in north Sinai have been implemented and 69 percent in south Sinai.

The committee also reviewed the five-year education plan in which some LE 13 million is being invested. The plan aims at building and equipping 80 schools to accommodate 50,000 boys and girls.

The construction of 180 schools and nine associated divisions has been completed during the current fiscal year. They accommodate 33,000 boys and girls. The investment amounted to LE two million.

The number of students registered in the universities has reached 2,500.

A center for ecological research has been constructed at St. Catherine at a cost of LE 10,000. The center will conduct mining and underground water research.

Also in operation is the Faculty of Teachers' Training in al-'Arish, which includes an annex for agricultural research.

The committee reviewed next year's projects, including the completion of the 110-kilometer Abu-Rudays-Ahmad Hamdi waterline, and al-Qantarah-Dayr al-'Abd-al-'Arish waterline.

Eighty-seven percent of this project was completed by the end of March.

Also reviewed was the completion of the waterline east of the lakes, and the construction of six desalination plants north and south of Sinai. The project will have a daily capacity of 350 cubic meters.

The plan includes the development of al-'Arish and St. Catherine airports, completing the connection of north and south Sinai to the telephone network, the development of al-'Arish and al-Tur hospitals, and the construction of a health unit in Kuntilla.

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CSO: 4504/458

GAS MARKETING AGREEMENT SIGNED

Kuwait ARAB OIL in English No 7, Jul 83 p 43

[Text] **Q**atar has signed a memorandum of understanding with British Petroleum Company PLC (BP) and Compagnie Francaise des Petroles (CFP) to exploit gas reserves off its northeast coast.

The memorandum was signed here in Doha last month by Qatar's Minister of Finance and Petroleum Sheikh Abdulaziz Bin Khalifa Al-Thani and representatives from BP and CFP, which would each have a 7.5 percent stake in the project, estimated to cost between five and six billion dollars.

Sheikh Abdulaziz told the Qatari news agency the signing of the memorandum would be followed later this year by the setting up of a liquified natural gas (LNG) company.

He said the north gas field project aimed at exploiting the state's more than 100 trillion cubic feet of gas to meet its needs for power generation, desalination, industry and agriculture, as well as provide feedstock for a planned six million tonne a year LNG plant.

Other partners could be brought in later for marketing purposes, but the foreign stake in the project would not exceed 30 percent. The state-owned Qatar General Petroleum Corporation will hold 70 to 85 percent of the shares.

The structure, located only few kilometers north of the Gulf peninsula state of Qatar is said to contain one of the world's largest reserves of natural gas.

Muhammad Said al Mis'hal, executive director of QGPC, told Khaleej Times that the project will be located about 10 kilo-

meters from the present industrial units in Umm Said. The aim is to be able to produce 20,000 million cubic feet of gas. Of this, nearly 12,000 million cubic feet will be for export and the rest, for domestic consumption, he added.

Besides liquefied natural gas (LNG) the project will include production of 50,000 to 70,000 bpd of naphtha and four million tons of natural gas liquids (NGL), Mis'hal said.

Outlay

"We are not sure of the sulphur content of the gas, but by our estimate it should be possible to produce some 40,000 tons of sulphur", the paper quoted them as saying. He said the \$5 billion outlay was an initial estimate, which could change according to market conditions as the project gets under way.

A separate company will be formed to finance and manage the north field project. According to Mis'hal 30 percent of the capital will come from shareholders and the rest from international banking institutions, including loans, not only from the Qatar government but possibly from other governments. The governments of the countries represented by the participating companies might extend loans, he said.

There would be two parts to the projects — one exclusively for LNG and the other for field development of NGL, naphtha. BP and CFP will be offered 7.5 percent each of the shares in the development and export of the LNG. Another 15 percent will be set aside for any new participants who might come in at a later stage or to increase the stake of BP and CFP.

SYRIA

DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION, REGIONAL ASPECTS REVIEWED

Paris LE MONDE in French 29, 30 Jun, 1, 2 Jul 83

[Article by Eric Rouleau: "Syria or the Snare"]

[Text] While in Tunis, Yasir 'Arafat steps up his pacifying statements on Syria, the situation in the Biqa', where Fatah loyalists are surrounded by Syrians, remains disturbing. On the night of 27-28 June, Fatah dissidents tried repeatedly to move toward positions held by 'Arafat's supporters, but were driven back.

In a series of four articles, the first of which is published today, Eric Rouleau describes the domestic situation in Syria, which has lived under a state of emergency for 20 years.

I. People's Palace

Syrians speak only in a whisper, passing from one to another descriptions of the "thing" that border on the fantastic. The unknown quite naturally gives rise to legends in a country where the government deliberately cultivates mystery. People's Palace, inaccessible to the common mortal since construction began 3 years ago, is said to be, not the headquarters of the Office of the President, but a formidable fortress. The chief of state and his close aides allegedly have the intention of digging in there, surrounded by armed cohorts, heavy artillery and antiaircraft guns. The "citadel" is reportedly equipped with a network of tunnels and an airport making it possible to break any future siege.

A discreet visit to the site enables one to correct the image projected by public rumor. The People's Palace is not like the Elysee, the White House or even the Kremlin. The state of war in which Syria has lived for 35 years, the regime it has chosen for itself, the powers which its leader, Hafiz al-Asad, has chosen for himself, and his personality would not lend themselves to it. The design, architectural style and site chosen definitely correspond to a military vision of power. The presidential complex, made up of four buildings, is perched like an eagle's nest on a hill occupying a strategic position.

Situated at the intersection of major highways leading to the borders: one to Lebanon, another to the Golan occupied by Israel and the third to the airport, the view is enough to take one's breath away. From his windows, the chief of state will have a panorama of the entire capital and the surrounding area.

One of the buildings, the least impressive, will house the private apartments of the president. Here, the military man gives way to the villager of yore, born 55 years ago to a peasant family in the al-Ladhiqiyah region. Five small rooms on one floor (where he will live with his wife and children), a tiny bathroom, bedroom, study, gym, all with bay windows.

On the ground floor is a huge patio with fountains, surrounded by a living room, dining area and sitting rooms, two of which are reserved for amateurs of the large or small screen.

The relative simplicity of this residence is in contrast with the splendor of the presidential palace, whose immensity and facade, on a scale with the pan-Arab ambitions of the leader of Syria, a member of the Ba'th Party since his adolescence, reminds one of the temples of the Pharaohs. A cathedral door, imposing colonnades and monumental stairway will introduce the foreign visitor into a sumptuous whole comprised of countless meeting rooms, reception halls, ceremonial salons able to accommodate a thousand guests, theaters -- including an amphitheater -- and, on the first floor, the offices of the president and his close aides. It is said that the decoration will achieve a harmonious blend of the function with the Damascus marquetry and the Andalusian arabesques.

The two other buildings bear witness to the extensive prerogatives of General al-Asad. One of them will house the chief of state's special advisers, who will ensure liaison with the Cabinet. It will serve as a meeting place for the Cabinet, Ba'th leaders, leaders of the National Front (the coalition of parties theoretically in power), and perhaps even the Armed Forces High Command, all presided over by the "supreme leader of the nation." The fourth building in the complex, standing on a nearby hill, is the "Guest Palace," designed to accommodate up to four chiefs of state and their entourages. Foreign policy is also -- is it necessary to mention it? -- the province of al-Asad.

There are no secret tunnels designed to evacuate occupants of the "fortress." On the other hand, a concrete slab has been installed to serve as a heliport, useful for official travels, and a shelter is planned in the palace basement, not surprising when one realizes that the palace is within range of Israeli artillery, scarcely 20 kilometers away as the crow flies. Another plan: The sinister Mezze Prison building of sad repute glimpsed on the flanc of a nearby hill will be destroyed and its occupants transferred elsewhere.

Political power is in the image of the People's Palace. The constitution proclaims that "the Syrian Republic is democratic, of the people and socialist," before guaranteeing, in various articles, all individual and collective freedoms. However, most of them have been suspended in keeping with the provisions of the state of siege, also perfectly "legal." The fundamental law confers on

the chief of state the right to dictate exceptional measures when a "serious danger threatens the national unity or the security and independence of the national territory." Syria is in fact threatened, from the outside by Israel and at home, by the "counterrevolutionaries," specifically, the Muslim Brotherhood. The state of siege, instituted precisely 20 years ago after the Ba'th Party came to power, is therefore still in effect. Whence the arbitrariness, abuses and sometimes crimes committed in the name of the national interest.

The media are subjected to censorship that becomes a caricature, so draconian is it. Foreign publications, whose importation has been a government monopoly for a year, are often banned for futile reasons. Freedom of expression has practically been confiscated, although the government generally tolerates criticisms leveled privately.

Intimidation is deemed to be manifestly more effective than the weapon of terror. New identity cards are issued to citizens only following a long police investigation. The *moukhabarat* (secret services) are omnipresent, in government offices, the lycees and universities, trade unions and political parties. The state of emergency still authorizes preventive arrests and detentions of indeterminate length and during which, according to Amnesty International, torture is commonly practiced, along with occasional executions. Interrogations can no longer be counted. According to one estimate, some 2,000 to 3,000 suspects, mostly Muslim Brotherhood members, but also Ba'thists, Nasserians and dissident communists, have been questioned since the beginning of the year. The number of political prisoners remains unknown, but rumor has it at between 5,000 and 10,000. The killings in the city of Ham'a in February 1982 remain engraved in everyone's memories.

It is true that the Muslim Brotherhood has given authorities some reason for the repression. The urban guerrilla warfare they have practiced for 7 years, bombings, summary executions and murders have taken the lives of several thousand persons, plain citizens, but also high government and party officials, judges, professors, loyalist shaykhs. But it is equally true that the government has used them to step up or develop security forces. The regular army, the defense brigades (headed by Rifaat al-Asad, brother of the president), the special units of Gen Ali Haydar, the gendarmerie, paramilitary militias made up of Ba'thists, workers trade unions, peasants and students join together to rake the country in the fullest sense of the word.

One cannot move about in Syria without running into one of these forces or another. Men in uniform or civilian dress, machine gun in hand, guard airports, official buildings, radio and television facilities, the universities, party headquarters and the residences of dignitaries of the regime. On the roads, at city gates and downtown, they carry out searches and demand proof of identity.

There is military surveillance, but political organization and a democratic facade as well. The People's Assembly (parliament) and the National Front, which includes the Ba'th Party and four other groups represented in government, serve as monitoring chambers. The Ba'th Party, which has the majority of seats in both, is the only one to have the right to engage in activities in the army

and educational establishments, to maintain headquarters throughout the country and to publish newspapers. The other parties in the coalition have to be content to distribute their publications semi-officially, to criticize some generally secondary aspect of domestic policy, foreign affairs being off limits. The Communist Party of Khalid Baghdash and Yusif Faykal, the main partner of the Ba'th, permitted itself to denounce the "parasitic capitalism" maintained by the government and to call for an "expansion of freedoms." It was "punished" two years ago and despite the 150,000 votes it gathered, "fate" decreed that none of its candidates would be elected to parliament!

Following a strike launched in support of a petition demanding the abolition of the state of emergency and the restoration of public freedoms, a number of professional associations: lawyers, engineers, doctors, pharmacists and writers, mainly, were deprived of their leaders in March 1980 (most were arrested) and then placed under the tutelage of the Ba'th, which also controls unions of workers and peasants, as well as of students, women, and so on.

The latest refinement in the "lineup" of the population is furnished by the "socialism" of the Ba'th. Nationalization of the economy has definitely given rise to undeniable benefits. It has encouraged accelerated development in terms of respect for national sovereignty, done away with the feudal class and that of the great industrial owners -- although a much more rapacious "new bourgeoisie" has long since taken their place -- and has given many social advantages to the deprived classes.

The fact nevertheless remains that the other side of the state-providence coin displays the face of the state-boss. Some 4 million Syrians, four out of ten derive their daily bread from it (figure obtained by multiplying the 1 million wage earners employed by the government: military men, members of the various security forces, civil servants, employees of the public sector, teachers, and so on, by 4, the average size of a family). Nor does this count the millions of peasants and their families who depend on it indirectly for the sale and marketing of their products. Consequently, one can imagine the means of pressure available to authorities. Let us mention but two stipulated by law: A government employee can be fired for a "serious mistake" (left up to the discretion of his superiors), but he can also be sentenced to 3 years in prison if he resigns without the express authorization of the minister under whom he serves. Any citizen of military age is a reservist who can be called up at any time for an unspecified length of time, whatever his means, profession and family responsibilities. Refusal to obey the mobilization order is punishable by 2 months to 7 years in prison.

As a result of the state of war and the Islamic sedition, the militarization of Syrian society has ended up by turning democratic institutions, including the Ba'th Party, into screens scarcely concealing the power of the army. Entrusted by the constitution with the task of defending the territorial integrity and the objectives of the revolution, the latter has gradually taken the place of government machinery in main fields, especially domestic security, education, major economic enterprises, (somewhat illicit) commerce, thus becoming the mainstay and partner of various categories of "haves" whose interests are not always avowable.

President al-Asad definitely holds the reins of power, but the People's Palace he is building for himself will also belong to the generals.

[30 Jun 83 p 5]

[Text] For 20 years, Syria has been living under a state of emergency, which makes it possible to suspend public and individual freedoms contained in the constitution. As a result of wars and the Islamic revolt, the army holds power behind a "democratic" facade. (LE MONDE, 29 June)

Alep--Gaiety reigns among the 400 guests celebrating under the sparkling lights of the Club d'Alep, the only establishment in vogue in the northern metropolis of Syria. While an army of white-coated servants offer rounds of appetizers, brochettes, roasted lamb, mountains of brown rice flavored with toasted almonds, while they empty bottles of whisky and champagne amidst the din of conversations punctuated by laughter, young people contort themselves to the frantic rhythms of the "jerk" or the "chicken." Shortly, their elders will glide over the floor to the beat of the tango or walse.

The quadrille would have better suited the outdated charm of the Club d'Alep, whose architecture, aging furnishings and clientele remind one of the nostalgic atmosphere recreated in the Visconti decors of "Death in Venice." Once reserved for an elite of landowners, big merchants and bankers, mainly Christians imbued with French culture, it hosted candlelight suppers and concerts, served the finest delicacies which the Alep aristocracy offered to its foreign guests. At the crossroads of caravan routes since time immemorial, Alep was until the end of the 1950's the economic metropolis and breeding grounds of the political world of Syria.

The succession of agrarian reforms, nationalizations and expropriations that hit the wealthy -- first under the regime of the union with Nasser's Egypt (1958-1961), then under that of the Ba'th starting in 1963 -- the centralization of economic power in Damascus, the break with Iraq, the back country and "bridge" to the Gulf markets, finally reduced Alep to the rank of subprefecture.

Here, the old bourgeoisie, as in the rest of the country, is not therefore dead. "It has nine lives, like a cat," one of its members told us. Many have emigrated to Europe or the United States, where they have invested their funds in American or Swiss banks. Those who stayed behind continue to live in sumptuous family homes, surrounded by period pieces, objets d'art and paintings worthy of being exhibited in museums and which they proudly point out to visitors. "I got my revenge. I am much richer now than I was before the socialist measures," some of them say.

Nouveaux Riches

Because of the scarcity of servants -- "What do you expect? They are now in power!" -- the traditional bourgeois do not entertain at home and find it easier to invite their friends to dine at the Club d'Alep. It is not difficult to pick out their table, around which the women are discreetly elegant and

at which one usually hears a polished French spoken. Without seeing them, they rub elbows with the "nouveaux riches" created by the Ba'thist regime and whom they label as "parvenus."

The latter, who speak broken English, display their wealth. Their wives buy their clothes from the major Parisian or New York couturiers and their necks are bowed down by the weight of diamonds. In order to entertain their guests at home or at "the Club," they spend huge sums on orchestras, famous singers and belly dancers.

The well-to-do Syrians celebrate without restraint or inhibitions before the supporters of the "socialist" government. Among the guests at the Club d'Alep one frequently sees high government officials or leaders of the Ba'th Party carousing. Or they are at the Damascus cabarets with evocative names such as "The Crazy Horse," "Caves du Roy," "Les Annees Folles," where a bottle of whisky costs 600 francs, a fourth of the monthly salary of a high official.

It is a secret to no one: Many officials in the public sector and dignitaries of the regime, whether civilian or military, are part of what is commonly called the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, in partnership with or, if one prefers, in complicity with two other categories of the wealthy. These nouveaux riches generally come from rural backgrounds, the original base of the Ba'th and speak only Arabic. They owe their social rise to the positions of power they occupy just as much as to the services rendered by "cosmopolitan" compatriots who play the middleman in international transactions. In 10 years, according to one estimate, some 5,000 new millionaires were created by the Ba'thist Government.

System of the "Three C's"

The main sources of wealth, legal or illegal, have to do more with *affairisme* than with orthodox business. The "D System" in other countries is equivalent here to the system of the "three C's": brokerage (*courtage*), contraband and corruption. The first of the three consists of deducting substantial commissions on contracts made between nationalized enterprises and foreign firms, commissions divided up by courtiers serving as hidden mediators between the contracting parties. When one realizes that the government is the sole entrepreneur for major development projects, that it handles 80 percent of all imports and 90 percent of all exports, one can better measure the extent of the fortunes amassed by private parties and one can understand how certain officials, whom rumor designates by name, have been able in just a few years to acquire farms, orchards, luxurious residences, not only in Syria, but in Europe and the United States as well.

Another bastard child of economic planning is smuggling, also practiced on a large scale. All products whose importation is banned or which are subject to quotas or even to the government monopoly are available on the black market, sometimes at reasonable prices because they escape taxes and customs duties. This parallel trade almost goes on in broad daylight, despite prison terms stipulated for those involved, both buyers and sellers.

The foreign cigarettes sold on street corners are available to visitors in ministerial offices. American refrigerators, German television sets or Italian air conditioners, officially banned from the country in order to protect local manufacturers, are displayed in the backrooms of specialized stores. According to the estimates of a high official in the Ministry of Economy, some 100,000 video tape recorders have been smuggled into the country. Ladies in high society exchange addresses where they can buy designer dresses, perfumes and other luxury items.

Illegal products are unloaded at ports or cross unbothered the Turkish, Jordanian and especially Lebanese borders, thanks to the obvious complacency of well-placed officials. "The biggest smuggler in the country is the army," we were told by one businessman who opened suitable offices in Beirut and Baalbeck. Military trucks use roads reserved for them and are subject to no control, especially if they have orders signed by higher officers. The rest is done by bribes.

Common in most developing countries, corruption has spread in Syria "in less than 15 years," notes one Damascus merchant. He adds: "A civil servant used to take offense if he were even offered a trifle. Now I have to give big bribes at all levels of the administration in order to get the slightest thing done."

Laxity was encouraged by the "liberalization" decreed with the coming to power of President al-Asad in November 1970, the influx of Arab capital after the 1973-1974 oil boom, the startup of ambitious and sometimes useful development projects -- "cathedrals in the desert" -- the absence of any democratic control, and finally, the political determination to consolidate the bases of the regime, to spare a bourgeoisie all the greedier the closer it came to power or even the use of power.

Strangled Bourgeoisie?

The government did try to fight the system of the three C's, but half-heartedly. The law on the elimination of "illicit profit" was rarely applied and only to underlings. For example, the recent public hanging of a bank employee for embezzling a few million francs gave rise to more pity than fear.

And yet, the economic situation no longer allows for leniency. The torrent has been reduced to ameager flow of petrodollars, foreign exchanges is increasingly rare, and the needs of the government and of the citizens are growing in a society that was imprudently doomed to consumption. The deficit in the trade balance has reached alarming proportions: Exports now cover only 40 percent of the cost of imports. In order to halt inflation and the devaluation of the pound, the authorities have to take various recovery measures.

The first parties targeted are the importers, who for 2 years have been forced to pay the government an advance of 25 to 70 percent of the exchange value of their orders in order to receive a letter of credit rarely issued in less than 6 months. Furthermore, they have to buy foreign exchange at a higher price than the official rate used for purchases of the public sector (5.4 Syrian

pounds to the dollar, compared with 3.9). The lists of products whose importation is banned or which come under the government monopoly are growing longer and longer. The beneficial result for the public treasury -- purchases abroad have dropped 50 percent since 1981 -- is detrimental to the profits of merchants and the supplying of small and medium-size private enterprises, some of which have had to file for bankruptcy.

After foreign trade comes domestic trade. Having virtually taken the place of wholesalers (to the extent of 80 percent of all business), the government recently began to try to impose its hegemony over retailers who still hold 70 percent of the market. The government is accelerating the expansion of its network of supermarkets, whose number will increase from 892 to 1,232 in the next two years and which sell better products less expensively than those of private shops. Furthermore, the regulation of rents and the seizure of land within and outside the limits of settlements and cities have checked real estate speculation considerably. Until the end of the last decade, it was one of the main sources of fortunes. While nearly all officials try to appear optimistic, the governor of Hama, Mohamed Harba, trained at our universities, observes: "Of course! We are going to liquidate the parasitic bourgeoisie, which has never invested anything or produced anything at all!"

Is the high life at the Club d'Alep a sham then? One is tempted to believe so at the end of an evening when alcohol loosens tongues: "The private sector is on its deathbed," grumbles one big merchant. Less resigned, another angrily adds: "Of course! They are strangling us in order to make Syria a more communist country than the people's democracies, but we will loosen their hold because we are stronger than they are!"

Whatever the case, all the rich, including the supporters of the regime, realize that the period of the fatted calf is long gone, even if it is true that the structures of government guarantee the survival of the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" and its associates for a long time to come.

[1 Jul 83 p 5]

[Text] Wars and domestic sedition have led the Syrian Army to exercise real political and economic power. Some officers, along with high officials and middlemen close to them, have grown rich in an illicit manner. The austerity instituted under the pressure of the situation has caused grumbling among bourgeois businessmen (see LE MONDE, 29, 30 June).

Damascus--What useful object increases in value with age? The answer to the riddle, at least for Syrians, is easy: Used cars have steadily gone up in price for years. A. B., a doctor in Damascus, will tell you that the Renault he sold in December for 88,000 Syrian pounds cost him 32,000 in 1975 and is now worth 100,000 (the Syrian pound is worth about 1.3 francs). The new Mazda he bought for 110,000 pounds in February has doubled in value!

Our interlocutor is one of the 28,000 private parties who have received the Japanese vehicle they ordered 2 years ago by paying 80 percent of the price to

the government, which has the monopoly. He is delighted, although he knows he paid four times the normal price for the car, the difference including taxes and customs duties. The government is also properly pleased. "We have won on all counts," explains Abdel Kader Kaddoura, vice president of the economic council. Actually, one should add to the net profit made other benefits derived from the operation. Let the reader be the judge: The government obtained from the suppliers easy payment terms for 5 years, which enables it to invest the sum of 1.2 billion pounds paid in cash by the buyers. Furthermore, the tapping of liquid assets in cash helps master inflation and stabilize the value of the currency. It should not then be at all surprising that the government is getting ready to import a new shipment of cars under the same conditions.

Without such maneuvers, the Syrian economy would not have had the spectacular achievements that do not fail to impress foreign observers. Despite limited and vulnerable financial resources, despite military expenditures that absorb two-thirds of the operating budget, the Ba'thist Government has, among other things, given the country road and rail systems, expanded and modernized the ports and airports, built hospitals, universities and stadiums, developed land snatched from the desert and swamps, taken electricity and drinking water to hundreds of villages. In the past 2 years, it has reduced the inflation rate by half (from 25 to 12 percent approximately) and revalued the Syrian pound upwardly, despite the sharp increase in the dollar and shooting prices on the world market.

Although credits allocated for national security in this year's budget are twice as high as those allowed for education, public health, social security and subsidies for basic commodities, Syrians are among the people the most well-off in the region. At any rate, the Ba'thist republic has no "pockets of poverty." The despotism engendered by the patron-state goes hand in hand with the material security provided by the state-providence. Plethora hiring in the public sector, the burgeoning armed forces and the Pretorian cohorts, the emigration of nearly a million laborers and skilled workers, members of the liberal professions, definitely hurt the country, but they have helped greatly to relieve unemployment.

Inadequate Material Advantages

Assured of a job, the Syrian citizen also enjoys a free education, from kindergarten through the university, and medical care at state institutions. The government provides a whole host of products: bread, rice, sugar, oil, fuel oil, powdered milk for babies, pharmaceutical products, at prices that are only one-half, one-third or even one-fourth those in neighboring countries. For example, bread costs three times more in Beirut than in Damascus. Sugar (rationed, along with oil and rice) is sold at government supermarkets at 1 pound per kilogram, compared with 3.5 pounds at the local grocery store. It is true that in the first case, one would have to resign oneself to occasional shortages and long lines.

Farmers, to whom the Ba'thist regime devotes great concern, receive low-interest loans and machinery, seed and fertilizer from the government at prices under

cost. On the other hand, they are forced to turn over their entire grain production at prices set by the government, prices that are "reasonable" in most cases and "generous" when it is a matter of wheat (indispensable to feed the people) and cotton (one of the sources of foreign exchange). Nevertheless, most cooperatives of small farmers have a shortage because of their inability to manage in a rational manner properties cut up by successive agrarian reforms and obstacles raised by a cumbersome bureaucracy.

Civil servants have more reason to complain. Their salaries, which are not indexed on the cost of living (they were increased only once in 1980 in proportions ranging from 25 to 70 percent), are more modest. They go from 1,000 to 4,500 pounds (for a minister), before deduction of the tax, which takes an average of one-third of the salary. The fact that the salary scale is based, not on the post occupied by on university diplomas -- an engineer or professor, for example, can earn more than a provincial governor or the general director of a minister -- constitutes but a mediocre consolation.

Actually, despite the regulation of rents, none of the salaries mentioned would be enough to pay the rent on a four-room apartment, unless one is lucky enough to live in a building built before 1970. Unfortunately, the doubling of the population since the coming of the Ba'th to power 20 years ago) and the rural migration have resulted in an unprecedented housing crisis. While families are crowded together in tiny rooms and hundreds of thousands of young people give up marriage or postpone it for lack of housing, the city of Damascus alone has 60,000 unoccupied apartments. The second paradox: Claiming to "respect private property," the government refuses to requisition it. On the other hand, it has planned housing complexes sold at cost, without thereby being within reach of every pocketbook. Lacking adequate loans, the volume and speed of construction would prevent resorption of the crisis for several decades (modest apartments cost from 2,000 to 6,000 Syrian pounds per square meter, while those in the better districts cost between 500,000 and 3 million pounds a unit, 40 to 50 times their worth in 1965). One can therefore understand why the authorities close their eyes when civil servants let themselves be bribed or, more honestly, desert their offices to engage in lucrative "moonlighting."

Democles Sword

Like nearly all Third World countries, Syria lives beyond its means and it is essentially thanks to the financial aid of Arab states that it manages to make ends meet. Because it is the only one to stand up to Israel since the separate peace concluded by Egypt, participants in the 1979 Arab summit conference granted it an annual income of \$1.85 billion. However, Iraq, Libya and Algeria do not pay their share, leaving it up to Saudi Arabia and certain Gulf countries to finance the war effort of the Ba'thist republic. Last year, Syria received only \$750 million, if one is to believe the vice president of the council, Kaddoura. The Democles sword is still suspended over Syria's head, which causes Kaddoura to say: "We do not want to be at the mercy of political vicissitudes or the moods of a given Arab chief of state."

Whence the many measures taken to rehabilitate government finances. Mining production (phosphate and oil) and farming have been intensified with some success, with the exception of wheat and barley, whose crops are down somewhat. For the first time in 15 years, according to Kaddoura, the public sector had a surplus of some 900 million pounds in 1982. Rapprochement with Khomeyni's Iran, despite serious ideological and political differences, made it possible to compensate for Iraq's default, obtaining from Tehran from 6 to 7 million tons of crude, including 1 million free. With the help of an austerity budget, Syria managed to limit its foreign debt, according to the World Bank, to \$4.2 billion, a relatively modest amount considering its development program and military expenditures.

It is true that the known public debt no longer includes debts contracted to the Soviet Union (essentially for the purchase of weapons), which are included in different account books kept secret. One presumes that Moscow has extended long-term loans at low interest rates to Damascus.

Despite the favorable conditions on which the USSR generally grants loans to its "friends," President al'Asad has always favored trade with the West, particularly the EEC, which remains Syria's top-ranking partner. However, following a constant decline for the past 10 years, trade with Eastern countries has recently begun to increase. On the one hand, restrictions imposed on the private sector, delays in settling accounts and the blunders of a shaky administration have discouraged many Western firms. On the other hand, the increasing financial difficulties which Syria is experiencing encourage it to turn toward more accommodating suppliers, especially when the latter provide the Ba'thist republic with the means, both political and military, of defending itself.

"Our leaders," one businessman told us, "are cautious tightrope walkers who have surrounded themselves with many safety nets, one of which consists of physically eliminating those who might endanger the existence, even the stability, of the regime."

[2 Jul 83 p 5]

[Text] Despite the considerable damage inflicted on the Syrian economy by the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie," on the one hand, and the "new millionaires" of the private sector, on the other, the economy is developing thanks to the "high wire act" of shrewd managers. The army exercises growing power, mainly because of its role as a "guardian of the revolution" (see LE MONDE, 29, 30 June and 1 July).

Hama--The city is a vast work site. Bulldozers push through wide avenues, while shrubs are being planted alongside. Buildings are going up; others being restored. Masons perched on scaffoldings use trowels to patch gaping holes in the facades. What was once the poor district of Hader is unrecognizable. Could it have been destroyed by an earthquake? Aside from its new part, the skeletons of buildings alternate with empty lots strewn with debris.

Hama will eventually wipe away the traces of the horror and shame, even if its residents never forget the killings that sent them into mourning last year. The trauma is too recent for them to be able to speak about it openly. One has to press them with questions in order to be able to reconstruct the fabric of the tragedy by comparing accounts.

In the middle of the night on 3 February 1982, the people of the city were awakened by a call to arms broadcast over loudspeakers atop the minarets. A voice called: "Allahou Akbar! (God is the mightiest!) The atheist regime is being defeated throughout Syria! Muslims of Hama, it is your turn to throw yourselves into the holy war (*djihad*)! Present yourselves at the mosques, where weapons will be handed out to you to drive out the infidels!" It was three o'clock in the morning.

Two hours earlier, Muslim Brotherhood commandos, some 500 Mojahedin armed with submachine guns and howitzers had sneaked into the city and occupied the strategic positions. At the right signal, they attacked or burned the buildings of the security forces, police stations, headquarters of the secret police, Ba'th Party headquarters and the residences of leaders, including that of the governor. Besieged with his wife and children, the latter, Mohamed Harba, formerly professor of geography and the holder of a doctoral degree from the University of Montpellier, was fired upon along with his bodyguards, two of whom were seriously wounded.

Execution of "Atheists"

Other Ba'thist or communist leaders, surprised in their beds, were murdered in cold blood. Armed with "black lists," the commandos went from door to door, liquidating "supporters of the regime." At the same time, their backers held summary trials. Mohamed El Habbal, worker and secretary of the CP branch in Hama, was sentenced to death by an "Islamic tribunal" presided over by one of his neighbors. "I could never have imagined that he belonged to the Brotherhood," he reported, "because he was drunk from morning to night." Other neighbors, these true friends, helped him to escape *in extremis*. Less lucky, some 250 "atheists" were executed during the four days which the occupation of the city by the Muslim Brotherhood lasted.

During that time, authorities seemed to hesitate about the choice of means suitable for quelling the rebellion, so high were the stakes. The city, exclusively Muslim, Sunnite and ultraconservative, has rebelled more than once since the Ba'th had come to power 20 years before, risking to take the northern region of the country, a kind of Vendee of Syria, along with it in dissidence. The Muslim Brotherhood roused the sympathy of the opposition of all stripes, even those resolutely lay in nature, for it was viewed as the spearhead of the liberating fight.

The ideology and program of the Brotherhood have elements capable of luring various strata of the population. The upper bourgeoisie, hurt by nationalization measures, are not the only ones to rejoice over the fact that the Syrian Islamic movement, deeming private property "sacred," preaches free enterprise and condemns agrarian reform, nationalizations and restrictions placed upon

domestic and foreign trade. The poorer among them could be happy when promised social justice, elimination of corruption and nepotism and the restoration of freedoms and the multiparty system, especially if they are unaware that the "atheists" and groups "under the influence of foreign powers" will be automatically banned from that divine society. As for the fanatics and the mystics, it was the "fighting avant-garde" of Adnan Okla, one of the dissident branches of the Brotherhood, that would reassure them by proclaiming that the future "government of God" will have a monopoly over truth and power.

Merciless Repression

And yet, all the factions of the Islamic movement concentrated their fire on two "flaws" of the Ba'thist regime: its lay nature and its Alids character.* The first of the two accusations was founded on fact: According to the terms of the constitution, Islam is not the state religion and the government pushed its neutrality to the extent of declaring both Christian and Muslim holy days as holidays. The second criticism is only admissible if one considers the Alids as "infidels" condemned to "choose between conversion and exile," to use the words of one leader of the "fighting avant-garde of the Muslim Brotherhood" (LE MATIN, 7 September 1982). It is also admissible if one deems it intolerable for members of a religious minority to occupy the presidency of the republic and key posts in the army and security forces. It is obvious that the Islamic movement plays on these two pictures, both religious and political, in order to mobilize the people against the regime.

The revolt in Hama in February 1982 was aimed, as was subsequently learned, at spreading throughout the country, acting as a catalyst for a coup d'etat. Two weeks previously, authorities had foiled a plot in the air force and feared that another such conspiracy would be crowned with success. Whence the 4-day delay, used to send reinforcements to various strategic regions, and the savagery of the intervention against the rebel city. The order given to the security forces and the Ba'thist militia combined was brutal in its simplicity: Crush the uprising, whatever the cost.

The Ba'thist soldiers gave no quarter. For a week, they killed, looted and raped. Apartment buildings, public buildings, mosques, churches in which the Islamic snipers took shelter were shelled by heavy artillery, while street fighting went on between the loyalist forces and the Mojahedin. In the course of raids that proceeded district by district, entire families of suspects were lined up at the doorways of their homes and executed on the spot. Those who tried to flee the city, followed by troops, were shot down. The bodies were buried in common graves.

* The Alids, or "followers of Ali," Mahomet's cousin and an unfortunate candidate for his succession, belong to the Shiite wing of Islam. Because their doctrine entails secret rites for initiates, the Sunnite fundamentalists have grouped them together throughout the centuries with Crypto-Christians, idolaters, all "infidels." The Alids community, some 10 percent of the total population, inhabits the mountains bearing their name in western Syria.

Thousands of Dead

The number of victims will probably never be known. Estimates made on the spot vary between 8,000 and 35,000 dead and missing among the civilian population. To this one must add the some 500 Mojahedin and the 3,000 to 5,000 members of the security forces reportedly killed during the confrontations.

Whatever the case, beyond a certain point, horror can no longer be computed. However well-founded the repression may have been, as one government supporter nevertheless critical of the way it was carried out told us, the "excesses" committed by the forces of order are "unardonable." But, he added, that was the exorbitant price of the regime's victory.

Decimated, divided and disoriented, the Muslim Brotherhood "temporarily" suspended their attacks which, before the events in Hama, had already cost the lives of thousands. Their popularity has reached a record low, for public opinion judges their "recklessness" harshly. They have disappointed the opposition groups, themselves reduced to impotence, groups that saw in them the instrument of change. Furthermore, the religious minorities, which represent nearly 40 percent of the population, now support the government more, fearful lest its fall bring about the settling of accounts, even a religious war.

The Hama uprising also gave the government an opportunity to terrorize all opponents, to tighten the links of the police net covering the country.

Without a doubt, the Ba'thist republic did consolidate its base, but did it not also undermine the future? The gap which the Hama massacre created cannot be so quickly bridged.

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AFGHANISTAN

SOVIET SOLDIERS RECOUNT THEIR DILEMMA IN AFGHANISTAN

Paris LIBERATION in French 5 Jul 83 pp 17-18

[Article by Savik Schuster: "Soviet Soldiers Speak About Their War in Afghanistan" Schuster was born 30 years ago in Lithuania. He left the USSR in 1971. He now works in Italy as a free-lance journalist for NEWSWEEK.]

[Text] A Lithuanian journalist, Savik Schuster, met with two groups of Soviet prisoners held in the Mujahidin camp of Allah Jirga for the past year or so. The camp is located between Quetta (Pakistan) and Qandahar (Afghanistan). Banished by the Red Army, they are waiting hopelessly, not knowing what they will do at the end of the war.

Valeriy Kiselev, a former draftee of the Red Army told me: "We had everything in the Soviet Union; we believed in our motherland. Why did they lie to us? We are not career soldiers. We are not fighting for money like the Americans. We are ordinary citizens doing our duty for our 2-year stint in the army. We gave of ourselves to learn the price of truth. An ordinary Soviet citizen knows nothing of the war in Afghanistan."

Not too long ago I met Kiselev and five other Soviet soldiers held prisoners by the Hezb-e Eslami Mujahidin in Afghanistan. They spoke openly, as do all those who have nothing to lose.

Kiselev's voice betrayed his anger, sadness and despair only toward the end of our 2-hour conversation under the surveillance of a Mujahidin major and the curious glances of a group of Afghan partisans who did not know a word of Russian. They. The whitewashed mud walls of the tiny room where we were staying continually reverberated this word, they. Kiselev stopped speaking abruptly, his eyes fixed on the surrounding mountain tops seen through the small window. He clasped his hands over his head and hid his face behind his arms, suddenly aware that his words were prisoners of a dried mud house in Allah Jirga, a Mujahidin training camp in the Afghan province of Zabol, some 180 kilometers from Quetta, the capital of Pakistani Beluchistan.

Valeriy Kiselev was caught in February 1982 while trying to sell four grenades in a village shop in the vicinity of Bagram, in the Parvan province, north of Kabul. Kiselev reminisced: "Our batalion was on active duty. The 'dembels' (nickname given in the Soviet army to the soldiers about to be discharged) had given me night

patrol duty. The 'dembels' were tough. They knew they were about to go home; they did not lift a finger and they made the 'blues' do everything. They would beat up those who did not obey and when we complained to the officers, they would beat us even harder." Kiselev told how he took shelter from the night cold inside a T55 tank in which he went to sleep; how they found him in the morning and threatened to beat him up again and have him court martialed. "That is when I got the idea of escaping and going home. I was scared. The 'dembels' had badly beaten me up the night before. I did not want to die at the age of 21. Why should I? We are not defending our country. Our fathers and mothers are not in danger. I took four grenades thinking I would exchange them for an Afghan costume. I did not want to fall into Mujahidin hands."

Valeriy Kiselev comes from Penza, an industrial town in the vicinity of Moscow, where he began to study engineering after finishing the lycée. He skipped classes for 24 hours and was expelled from school where attendance is compulsory. He was drafted in 1981. After a 6-month course in Ionava, in Lithuania, he was transferred to Fergana, an important military base in Soviet Uzbekistan, near the Afghan border. "We were wasting our time in Fergana doing construction work and one day, the military authorities ask who wanted to enlist for Afghanistan. The political instructor, a first lieutenant supposedly back from Afghanistan, gathered us around and told us that the imperialist forces had entered Pakistan to fight against the Afghan people's revolution; that Babrak Karmal was a friend of the Soviet Union and that it was our duty to defend the Afghan peasants against the reactionary mercenaries."

Kiselev's story seems so naive and unreal that it is difficult to believe it. No one knows what is happening within the Red Army in Afghanistan--we have no point of reference. There are very few Soviet war prisoners and they are scattered throughout the whole country, in the middle of those mountains where walking is the only means of communication. The few soldiers of the Red Army who were captured in 1980-1981 were executed on the spot, once, even in front of the camera of a private British television network. Mangal Hussain, the Hezb-e Eslami's spokesman, said: "We are now ready to keep them with us, but the Soviets level under their bombs the villages where we hide the war prisoners. They prefer killing their own men rather than risking the release of any information."

Conversely, the Soviet military authorities warn their soldiers not to fall into Mujahidin hands. The officers hold periodical political information meetings during which they explain that the "basmachi" (a term used in Soviet history books to refer to the armed Muslim groups who fought against Soviet law in the 1920's) will gouge the eyes of any captured Soviet soldier and cut off their ears. "The officers often spoke to us about the dangerous teams of very well trained foreign mercenaries who were supposed to have entered Afghanistan through Pakistan." One of his companions interrupts him: "Many Soviet soldiers would like to flee the war in Afghanistan, but their families are back home and they could be victims of reprisals. Furthermore, it is not easy to desert. You never know from where is coming the bullet that will hit you."

The six Soviet soldiers I met in Allah Jirga represent all the social, cultural, ideological and geographic differences encountered in the USSR.